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Lawn&Garden Marketing

JUNE 1987

Reports on: Safer financing deal '87 snowthrowers • Decreased winter sales

The color purple

One retailer's modest theme flowers in winter.

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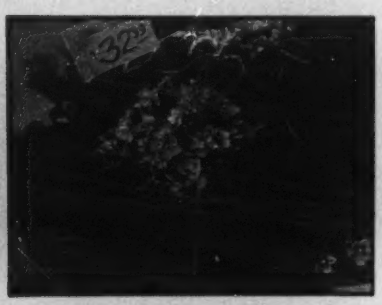

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FEATURES

Manufacturers plow through obstacles with innovations

Coming off a slack season, snowthrower makers are entering the '87 production cycle in low gear but with high invention. 5

Making tracks

Some of the emphasis manufacturers are putting on their new crop of snowthrowers is on using tracks, rather than wheels, to pull the machines efficiently into the deep white stuff. .7

The color purple

An Earl May retailer whips the winter blahs and boosts his January sales 67 percent with a colorful off-season promotion—an African Violet Festival. 14

Shades of success

Garden supply retailers know the value of selling African violets. Not only are the plants extremely popular, they are also a big profit maker. 15

Cover photography by Kevin Anderson; hand-coloring by Anita Blattner.

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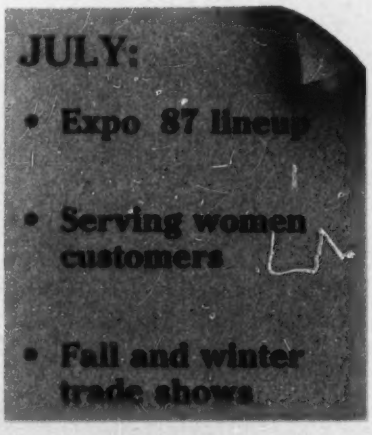
Mesto USA and Mesto Germany form U.S. partnership; American Intertool acquires Skodco; Lowe's chairman to keynote Hardware Industry Week; Garden center tours part of AAN convention lineup. 24

Product Listings

Exclusive product listings this month are: Maintenance-free lawn spreaders from Central Quality; Agro-Chem introduces its first retail product line, Green Magic. Also featured: '87 snowthrower models. 30



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Product Movement Report

Winter 1986

Sales in five of nine winter product categories decreased according to retailers responding to this *Lawn & Garden Marketing* survey.

Nationally, more retailers reported sales of snow-related products down than up, particularly snowthrowers. OPE dealers were hardest hit: 37 percent reported sales down; only 20 percent reported sales up.

Responses from retailers in the North Central and Western regions weighed down national snowthrower totals. And only slightly more Southern retailers reported increases than decreases, whereas more Northeastern retailers related increases. This trend was duplicated in two other snow-related categories measured, snow shovels and melting compounds.

Replacement parts nationally were stable. But North Central retailers again reported sales down, likely reflecting decreased demands for snow removal equipment repairs there.

A majority of retailers reported sales of trim-a-tree products up; this was the only category in which more North Central retailers reported sales increases than decreases. In three of the four regions, more retailers reported sales increases than decreases in birdfeeders and indoor plant supplies as well.

In general, it appears that retailers in regions like the Northeast, hardest hit by late winter storms, experienced a sales boom compared to winter 1985. And retailers in regions like the North Central, with an unexpectedly mild winter, experienced depressed sales.

In fact, one out of every two North Central respondents rated this past winter selling season as below average or poor; the majority credited "lack of snow" as the factor most influencing sales. In the Northeast, nearly one in two respondents rated the winter sales season as good to excellent; the majority of respondents credited "heavy snowfall" as the factor most influencing sales.

—LGM

The winter 1986 survey results were based on 353 responses from three categories of retailers: garden centers, hardware/home centers and power equipment dealers. Respondents were asked to compare sales of product categories in winter 1986 to winter 1985.